

Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application. Please amend Claim 1 and add new Claims 53-57 as indicated in the Listing of Claims:

Listing of Claims

Claims 1 – 44 (cancelled).

45. (Currently Amended) A manhole device for a vessel, comprising:
a flange extending outwardly from the vessel and having an inner periphery defining a manhole;
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a closure pivotally and telescopically mounted to the vessel adjacent the flange for releasably and sealably engaging the flange;
at least one wheel rotatably mounted to the closure;
at least one track extending outwardly from the vessel proximate the flange for engaging the at least one wheel ~~and raising the closure vertically above the flange as the closure pivots;~~ and,
at least one clamp to releasably engage the closure for contracting the closure into sealable engagement with the flange.

46. (Original) The manhole device as claimed in Claim 45, further comprising a handle extending outwardly from the closure for assisting an operator in pivoting the closure.

47. (Original) The manhole device as claimed in Claim 45, wherein two wheels are oppositely and rotatably mounted to the closure, and two spaced-apart tracks are disposed on the vessel to respectively engage the wheels, whereby binding of the closure is reduced as the closure rises above the flange.

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48. (Original) The manhole device as claimed in Claim 45, wherein
the at least one clamp comprises:

the closure having at least one slot;
at least one threaded bolt pivotally mounted to the vessel and
removably extending through the at least one slot; and,
a matingly threaded nut adjustably engaging the bolt, whereby as the
nut moves toward the closure, the nut exerts pressure against the closure to releasably
seal the closure to the flange.

Claims 49 – 52 (cancelled).

53. (New) A manhole device for a vessel having a manhole,
comprising:

a closure pivotally and telescopically mounted to the vessel adjacent
the manhole for releasably enclosing the manhole;
at least one wheel rotatably mounted to the closure;
at least one track extending outwardly from the vessel proximate the
manhole for engaging the at least one wheel, whereby as the at least one wheel
engages and rises along the tract as the closure pivots, the closure rises above the
manhole.

54. (New) The manhole device as claimed in Claim 53, further
comprising at least one clamp to releasably engage the closure for contracting the
closure into sealable engagement with the manhole.

55. (New) The manhole device as claimed in Claim 53, further
comprising a handle extending outwardly from the closure for assisting an operator in
pivoting the closure.

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56. (New) The manhole device as claimed in Claim 53, wherein two wheels are rotatably mounted to the closure, and two spaced-apart tracks are disposed on the vessel to respectively engage the wheels as the closure pivots.

57. (New) The manhole device as claimed in Claim 53, wherein the at least one clamp comprises:

the closure having at least one slot;

at least one threaded bolt pivotally mounted to the vessel and removably extending through the at least one slot; and,

a matingly threaded nut adjustably engaging the bolt to releasably exert pressure against the closure and releasably enclose the manhole with the closure.
